

Transnationalisation Patterns in Media Consumption of Populist Radical Right Parties' Twitter Followers in Germany, Switzerland and Austria

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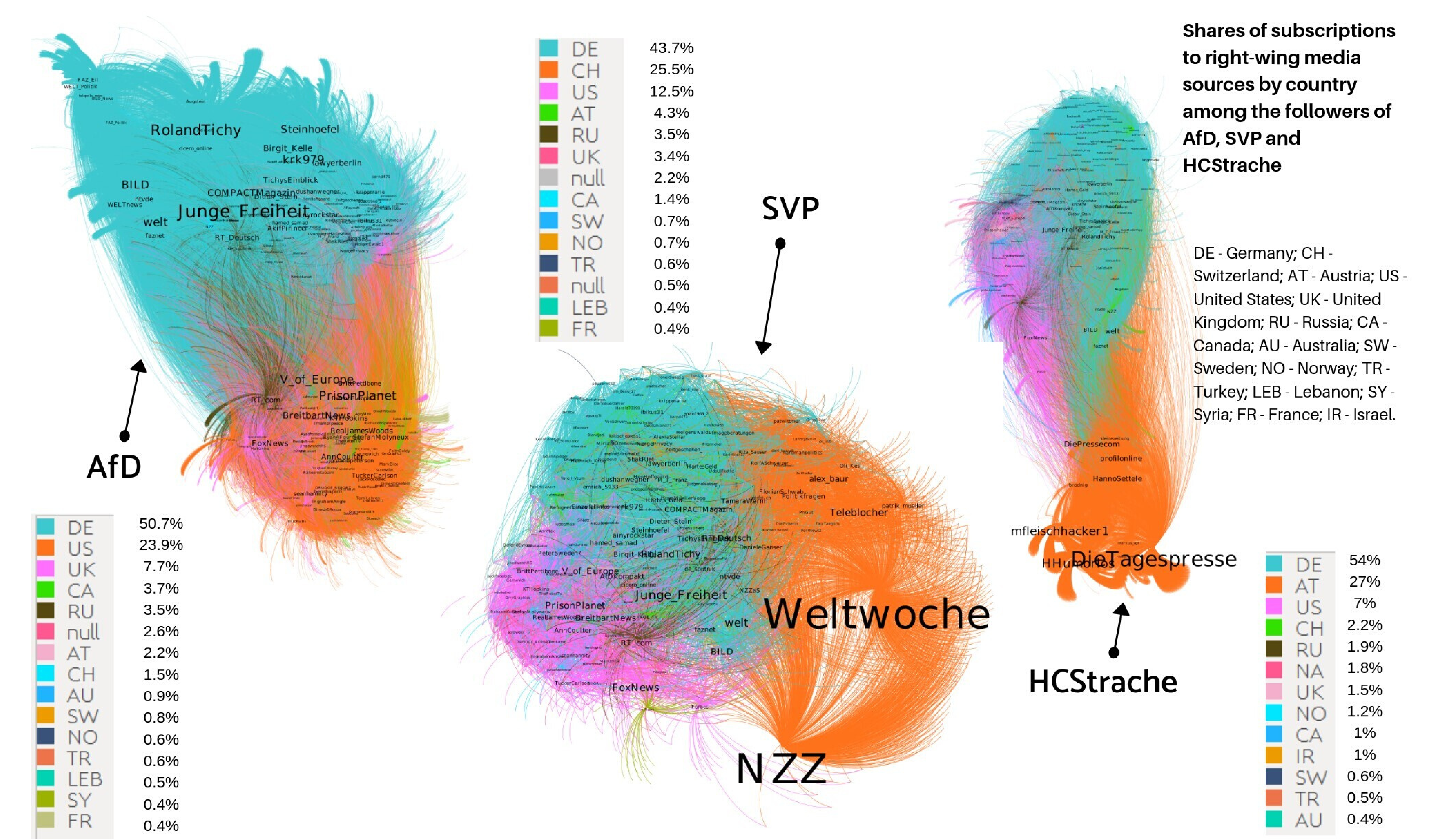
Hypotheses

H1: Right-wing mediasphere is transnationalised on the demand-side.

H2: Radical right users consume foreign content predominantly from the culturally and linguistically proximate countries and the US.

Data

The followers of the official Twitter accounts of AfD (n=123868), SVP (n=10308) and Heinz-Christian Strache (n=53789) and the accounts followed by these followers. Collected in Fall 2018 with Twitter API. In the final analysis only "partisan" users - follow only the right-wing party but not others are included (n=58363 for AfD, n=3001 for SVP, n=48801 for Heinz-Christian Strache).



Main Findings

Media diets of the followers of AfD and SVP are more transnational for the right-wing media than for the left-wing and neutral ones, following the hypothesis. In Austria, the opposite is the case.

Group	t	Degrees of Freedom	p-value
AfD	60.91	47402	< 2.2e-16
SVP	2.7656	2597	0.005721
HCStrache	-93.4	17557	< 2.2e-16

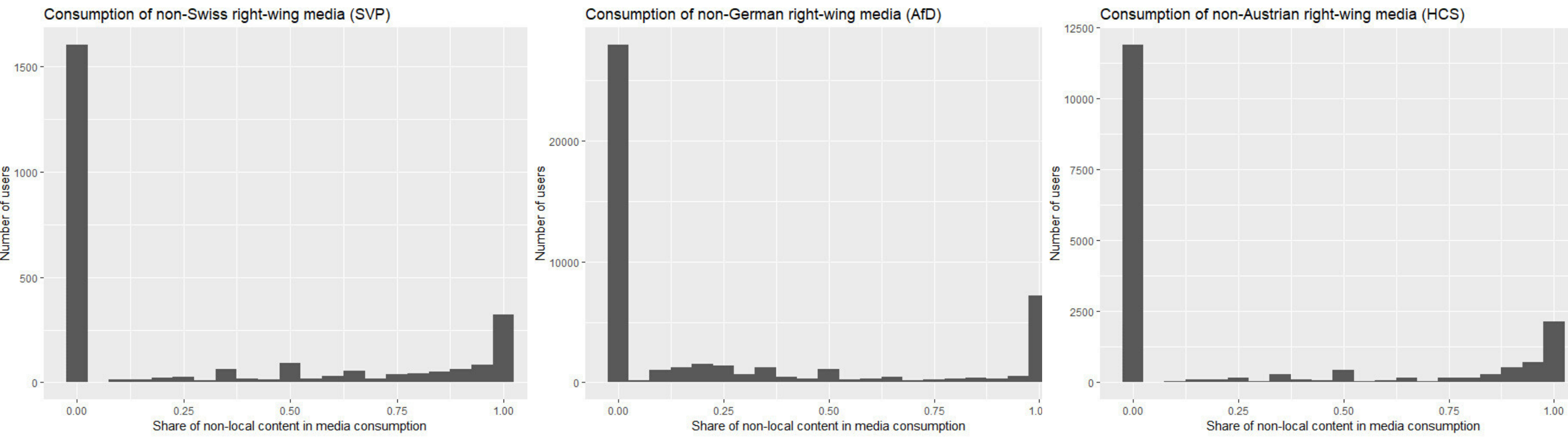
Results of independent-samples t-tests; the difference in mean shares of non-local right-wing and left-wing/neutral media sources in individual media consumption.

Extreme right users are more likely to follow media sources from culturally and geographically proximate countries or from the US.

Right-wing Twitter users predominantly follow alternative media (on aggregate level, in AfD sample 66.7% of all subscriptions are to alternative media; in SVP sample – 63.3%; in HCStrache sample – 59%).

Alternative media from Germany are more influential in Austria in Switzerland than national alternative sources there; in Germany, the most followed alternative sources are from the US and from Germany itself.

On the aggregate level, foreign sources are more popular than national ones in terms of the number of followers in each group. But transnationalisation occurs only among heavy news consumers; for other users foreign media are of negligible importance.



Group	t	Degrees of Freedom	p-value
AfD	54.255	16040	< 2.2e-16
SVP	21.145	852.62	< 2.2e-16
HCStrache	52.088	4801.3	< 2.2e-16

Table 2. Results of Welch's two-samples t-tests; the difference in the mean number of subscriptions to right-wing media sources between users with highly transnational media consumption and others.